

New Barnsbury New Homes Allocation

We have committed to building new homes based on the housing needs survey we carried out in 2019 and although what we are planning to build is based on what you have told us, circumstances change, people move and this might have implications for how we allocate homes across the phases.

Following consultation meetings with residents to talk through our proposal of how we might allocate the new homes, residents have requested more information to have a better understanding of how these homes will be allocated.

The order of priority for allocations will be:

1. Housing need
2. Medical need
3. Downsizing
4. Separate (enclosed) kitchen
5. Housing preference
6. Length of time living on Barnsbury Estate

Housing need

By housing need we mean your household and who is living in your home. We will allocate properties using the following guidance relating to size of accommodation:

- A separate double bedroom for each couple or single parent.
- A separate bedroom for any other adult household member (18+). This may be single or double. (Please note that lodgers are not considered part of the household.)
- A single bedroom for one child.
- A double bedroom for two children except where:
Two children of the opposite sex must share and one has reached seven years of age.
Two children of the same sex are expected to share, unless one has reached the age of 18 or there is specific supporting medical evidence to support that they cannot (this will need to be assessed by independent medical advisors).

Where you have indicated that you require a larger property than you currently occupy, we will require evidence of any additional household members living at the property as their sole and principle home. For children under the age of 18, this will be a full birth certificate and in some cases, evidence that you have custody, in this case evidence of being in receipt of child benefit will be required.

Household members over 18 years of age will need the following information:

- Proof of ID such as a passport or photo driving licence or evidence of their Right to Rent.
- Evidence of relationship to the tenant.
- Evidence that the property is their sole and principle home and has been for the 12 months prior to the tenancy start date of your new home. For this, we require one of each of the following:
 - Council tax/utilities bill (mobile phone bills are not accepted).
 - Wage slips/P60 (showing address).
 - Bank statements must be provided for their principal bank account which has their income paid into it, whether that is salary, benefits or pension. These statements must be originals or duplicates provided by the bank (re-issued copies of statements are not accepted).
- Full credit report.
- Other official correspondence showing address will be considered if the above is not available.

Medical need

If you or a member of your household have a medical condition that you wish to be taken into consideration when being allocated a new home, we will require supporting evidence such as the following:

- Medical report/letter – from a qualified professional.
- Letter from school regarding a child's condition.
- Other professional report – from a social worker or occupational therapist.
- Medical records obtained by resident from a doctor.
- Copies of prescriptions for current medication.

This information should make it clear how your medical need impacts your housing need. For example if you have limited mobility and require a walk-in shower we will ask our independent medical advisors to make an assessment based on the information you provide to us; or if you have a child on the autistic spectrum, we would require more details as to how this needs to be taken into consideration in your housing requirements. If you have a medical condition that prevents you from living on a specific level floor, we would need evidence to support this. Once the medical assessors have made their assessment, we will notify you of their decision.

If you are unhappy with the decision and wish to appeal against it, you should do so within 10 working days of notification of the decision. Appeals must be put in writing to the BEST office, stating in full the reasons for the appeal. Appeals are then reviewed by our Appeals Panel. In order to ensure that independence is maintained, the Appeals Panel consists of two Senior Managers who have not previously been involved in the case. You would then be notified of the Panel's decision.

Vulnerability

In some of the meetings residents expressed their concern about how we are engaging with vulnerable residents to ensure that we know their housing needs and preferences. We have been visiting residents at home and the BEST team have been checking records to check whether we have had any contact with a resident. If no contact has been made we will investigate further to establish whether they may be vulnerable and how we can support people to understand their needs.

Rehousing overcrowded households

Residents asked what will happen to over-crowded families in the interim, while waiting for their phase. During the first phase we will seek to address the housing needs of those in Blackmore, Molton, Messiter and Jocelin and it is very unlikely that we will be able to rehouse anyone else within this phase. Housing needs change and therefore allocations will be kept under constant review.

In between phases if we get a vacant home within our existing blocks we will seek to offer it to those Barnsbury residents on the transfer list or residents who are overcrowded (subject to verification). This will have implications for when you get rehoused in one of the phases of the new development. For example if you are rehoused in Messiter you will be rehoused in Phase 1a, if you are rehoused in Redmond, you will not be allocated a new property until Phase 2.

For those who have been decanted or transferred to a flat on Old Barnsbury from New Barnsbury, we will seek to include you in your original phase where there are available properties. However we will need to have a cut-off point on your decision as to whether you want to return to New Barnsbury or not, as we will need to ensure that your preferences for fixtures and fittings are taken into account. For Phase 1A this is likely to be July 2024.

If your housing needs change such that you become overcrowded after you have moved to your permanent home we will not be able to assist further with rehousing. You will need to register with LBI for a transfer.

Splitting households/housing adult children

Islington has approximately 15,000 households on the housing needs register and we are working with the Council to help address need and ensure that the best use of the limited social housing is made. For this reason we will usually restrict the offer of splitting a household to a one bedroom property in addition to addressing the remaining tenants' housing needs.

For example, if you have a three bedroom property and need a four bedroom property, in exceptional cases we may agree to split the household and provide two two bed roomed properties. If we agree to split a household this would be on the understanding that the original tenant will not be entitled to keep the spare room as per the offer agreement.

Housing preference

The term 'like for like' was referred to at the different meetings and this term has been interpreted in different ways. When this term is used, it is intended to mean that the same number of bedrooms will be re-offered rather than any other property type. This means for example if you currently have a ground floor flat and would like to be allocated on the ground floor in the new development this should be recorded as a preference. We will try and meet as many of your preferences as possible when we discuss property allocation with you, and consider what is most important to you.

We are building very few duplex flats and therefore these will be allocated on housing need alone. Following consultation, we agreed to include a further category for prioritising allocations – this will be below priorities 1, 2 and 3:

This applies to a tenant who currently has a two bedroom, four person home (i.e. two double bedrooms) but their housing need is for fewer people. If they want two double bedrooms in their new home, this may be considered only after priorities 1, 2 and 3 and where supply allows.

Length of tenancy tie break

Where there is more than one resident with the same housing needs and preference and both have said that they want a particular flat (let's say Flat 5), in order to decide who gets their choice of flat, we will allocate it to the person who has been a tenant on the estate longest. As our records are not 100% for pre-handover from Islington Council, we will need to rely on residents to provide this information. Once we have made a decision, we will inform you and you can appeal through the same process as outlined in the 'Medical needs' section on page 2.

Right to return

If you are rehoused on Old Barnsbury or elsewhere in Islington, for reasons other than decant purposes, your right to return will be by agreement.

If you qualify for a 'plus one' bedroom (i.e. your housing need is plus one) this may be a single bedroom. Households with children will be prioritised for a two bedroom, four person home over someone who is being offered a plus one bedroom home.

Rents*

In accordance with the Offer document and agreement of BEST Board, the following rents will be charged in the following circumstances (subject to permitted annual increase):

- Existing New Barnsbury** tenants who held a tenancy at the time of the ballot (19th March 2021) will be offered a new property at the equivalent of the existing rents and set as if they were lets on the undeveloped Barnsbury Estate.

**Please note that 'New Barnsbury' refers to Adrian, Aldrick, Amory, Blackmore, Charlotte Terrace, Crispe, Ewen, Jocelin, Kenwick, Mavor, Messiter, Molton, Redmond, Ritson, Thorpe, Thurston, Venn Houses.

- Existing Old Barnsbury tenants – will stay at the same rent level or equivalent level if moving to a larger property, whether to a newly developed property or elsewhere on the Barnsbury estate.
- Residents who were not tenants at the time of the ballot will be set a rent based on Newlon Islington rents (not Barnsbury rents) when they move into a property, whether it is on Old or New Barnsbury.
- Those residents on Affordable rents who are offered a newly developed property will have their rent based on Newlon Islington rents (not Barnsbury rents) once they move into the new properties. Those on Affordable rents living in Old Barnsbury will remain so unless they move to a new property within New Barnsbury.
- For any residents moving, during the course of the redevelopment, to another property within the estate (not due to decanting) will be charged a rent on an equivalent level to their previous rent, taking into account any change in bedroom size.

*If you require more information about which rent you are on or what you will be charged please contact the BEST office.